

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 267 010

SP 026 729

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TITLE Addressing Teacher's Personal Concerns in Staff Development Efforts.
PUB DATE Apr 85
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (69th, Chicago, IL, March 31-April 4, 1985).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Change Strategies; *Decision Making Skills; *Educational Innovation; Locus of Control; Teacher Administrator Relationship; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Effectiveness
IDENTIFIERS *Stages of Concern about the Innovation

ABSTRACT

As individuals move through the process of adopting a new innovation in their local setting, they are seen as moving through seven Stages of Concern: Awareness, Informational, Personal, Management, Consequence, Collaboration, and Refocusing. This paper focuses on conceptualizing strategies for the clinical application of Stages of Concern as a means to understand, conceptualize, and address the concerns of teachers as they implement a new innovation. More specifically, it focuses on a problem that change facilitators report is paramount--addressing the personal concerns of practitioners. It is pointed out that the curriculum change literature has a relatively strong base of sociologically-oriented strategies when psychologically-oriented strategies are needed as a complement, especially for addressing personal concerns. The psychological literature on decision making and efficacy has not been utilized to any great extent and offers real prospect for helping address the personal concerns of teachers about implementing an innovation. Several specific concepts from the work of Janis (1976) and Bandura (1977; 1982) are presented and several practical uses of their ideas are illustrated. (JD)

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ADDRESSING TEACHER'S PERSONAL CONCERNS IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

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A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association in Chicago. April, 1985.

Hall, Wallace, & Dossett (1973) proposed that practitioners typically pass through a predictable sequence of stages of concern as they take on a new innovation. These Stages of Concern (SOC) are based on a definition of concern as "an aroused state of personal feelings and thought about a demand as it is perceived" by the individual (Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1979). Stages of Concern is one of three parts of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) which also includes the level of actual implementation of the innovation by the individual, using a framework known as Levels of Use (LoU), and the ways in which the innovation has been implemented in practice using a framework known as Innovation Configuration (IC).

As individuals move through the process of adopting an new innovation in their local setting, they are seen as moving through seven Stages of Concern (Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1979). These stages are: Awareness, Informational, Personal, Management, Consequence, Collaboration, and Refocusing. The stages and their definitions are presented in Figure 1.

Stages of Concern can be assessed in several ways: by means of a standardized questionnaire using 35 Likert items, by an open-ended written statement of concerns, or by a brief informal interview. Hall, George, & Rutherford (1979) describe the validity and reliability of the questionnaire as well as procedures for scoring the instrument and interpreting the results. Newlove & Hall (1976) describe the less rigorous means to collect open-ended statements about practitioner concerns and how these statements can be scored and interpreted. The informal interview provides change facilitators with a rough, but quickly obtained view of the stage of concern of each practitioner interviewed.

SOC's have been used to document the shift in teacher concerns over time in several research studies (Hall, 1979; Loucks, 1977; Loucks & Melle,

STAGES OF CONCERN ABOUT THE INNOVATION

- 6 REFOCUSING: The focus is on exploration of more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possibility of major changes or replacement with a more powerful alternative. Individual has definite ideas about alternatives to the proposed or existing form of the innovation.
- 5 COLLABORATION: The focus is on coordination and cooperation with others regarding use of the innovation.
- 4 CONSEQUENCE: Attention focuses on impact of the innovation on students in his/her immediate sphere of influence. The focus is on relevance of the innovation for students, evaluation of student outcomes, including performance and competencies, and changes needed to increase student outcomes.
- 3 MANAGEMENT: Attention is focused on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information and resources. Issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, scheduling, and time demands are utmost.
- 2 PERSONAL: Individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation, his/her inadequacy to meet those demands, and his/her role with the innovation. This includes analysis of his/her role in relation to the reward structure of the organization, decision-making and consideration of potential conflicts with existing structures or personal commitment. Financial or status implications of the program for self and colleagues may also be reflected.
- 1 INFORMATIONAL: A general awareness of the innovation and interest in learning more detail about it is indicated. The person seems to be unworried about himself/herself in relation to the innovation. She/he is interested in substantive aspects of the innovation in a selfless manner such as general characteristics, effects, and requirements for use.
- 0 AWARENESS: Little concern about or involvement with the innovation is indicated.

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1980) and to reflect implementation success as a dependent variable in a major study of principal leadership style and intervention tactics (Hall et al., 1984). Soc's were also used as a dependent measure in a quasi-experimental study of the effects of participation in interactive research and development on teachers (Huling, 1982).

The use of SOC's to facilitate change efforts is less well developed. Hall (1979) has proposed interventions based on field-based practitioners that are related to the SOC framework. He also has proposed ways that SOC's and LoU's can guide program development, validation and dissemination efforts (Hall, 1981) and studied the effects of organizational development interventions on Stages of Concern (Ruch & Hall, 1982). In general, however, little research has been conducted on the viability and effects of mediating change efforts using SOC data.

This paper focuses on conceptualizing strategies for the clinical application of Stages of Concern as a means to understand, conceptualize and address the concerns of teachers as they implement a new innovation. More specifically, it focuses on a problem that change facilitators report is paramount-- addressing the personal concerns of practitioners. Personal concerns are especially important at this time for several reasons:

1. School Reform Mandates and Pressures. Mandates for school reform frequently have implicitly or explicitly blamed teachers for past problems yet insisted on their participation in the proposed corrective practices. Teachers consequently have felt personal concerns such as a sense of harrassment and of not being appreciated.

2. Tensions Between Professional and Bureaucratic Conceptions of the Teaching Profession. Wise and Darling-Hammond (1984) describe the tension between a bureaucratic and a professional conception of teacher evaluation.

The bureaucratic orientation consists of treating all teachers in the same manner through the use of rules and regulations, and emphasizing minimum acceptable performance. In contrast, a professional orientation consists of a flexible, growth-oriented and differentiated evaluation approach. This distinction between bureaucratic and professional orientations can be generalized to issues such as implementing new innovations, and is critically related to problem of resolving teachers' personal concerns. For example, District and school-based administrators frequently complain that teachers are more interested in protecting themselves by bureaucratic means such as the teacher contract rather than in improving instruction through the implementation of needed reforms.

3. Possible Resolutions of Personal Concerns Are Difficult to Define and Package. Strategies for resolving personal concerns are rarely simple or easily generalizable. Unlike powerful instructional training programs, strategies for resolving personal concerns can not be easily transported. Moreover, district leaders have often felt that it is not wise to cater to such concerns which are often viewed as "unprofessional" behavior conducted by individuals who can be characterized as "resistors" to the innovation. The alternate view proposed by the CBAM staff that personal concerns are a natural stage (but not permanent condition) of persons implementing an innovation is not necessarily the common view among district leaders.

Having now established the importance of a focus on the personal concern stage, it is possible to turn directly to the issue of how such concerns can be meaningfully understood and addressed. Hall, George, & Rutherford (1979) describe personal concerns as follows: "(The) individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation, his/her inadequacy to meet those demands, and his/her role with the innovation. This includes analysis

of his/her role in relation to the reward structure of the organization, decision-making and consideration of potential conflicts with existing structures or personal commitment. Financial or status implications of the program for self and colleagues may also be reflected."

For discussion purposes, the set of personal concerns defined above have been sorted into three clusters. The clusters are not designed to be mutually exclusive but, instead, represent useful ways to organize the analysis and proposed strategies for addressing personal concerns.

The Organizational/Political/Professional Cluster

The first cluster consists of the organizational, political and professional aspects of personal concerns. Included here would be concerns about, "his/her role in relation to the reward structure of the organization" as well as, "financial or status implications of the program for self and colleagues." In short, this cluster has a distinctly organizational sociology and culture flavor to the personal concerns delineated.

Strategies for addressing these personal concerns have a common theme: they seek to establish the perception for the individual teacher that the organization will be supportive of their choice to engage in the change effort. While the actual implementation of the change may not have begun-- in LoU terms, the teacher is not yet a user of the innovation-- the teacher still needs to feel that: a) the organization values and has a priority for the proposed change, b) the organization will reward eventual users, c) a solid network of support and assistance will be available, d) there will be a collegial effort to implement the change-- a teacher will not be isolated, e) there is enthusiasm about the change, and f) there will be protection against potential "enemies".

The curriculum change literature is rich with implications and

strategies for how the organizational sociology dimensions of personal concerns can be addressed. While these strategies don't always focus on the specific issues of rewards and status as such, they do propose ways to develop a sense of organizational priority and pressure for the change, a sense of enthusiasm and support for persons undertaking the change, and the importance of finding the activity rewarding within the organization. The strategies also emphasize the importance of colleguality norms, and networks of assistance and support. Especially useful in this regard is the work on collegiality (Little, 1981); networking (Miles, 1977; Lieberman, 1977; and Loucks, 1983); supportive leadership (McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978; Little, 1981); directed personal intervention (Emrick & Peterson, 1978); and status analysis and the politics of exchange (Taylor, Sullivan, & Dollar, 1978). It is assumed that this literature is well known to this audience and need not be explored at great length in this paper.

Decision-making/commitment Cluster

Hall, George & Rutherford (1979) identify personal concerns as also focusing on, "...decision-making and consideration of potential conflicts with the existing structures or personal commitment." The generic importance of this second cluster of personal concerns is validated in the psychological literature, particularly the literature on conflict and decision-making.

In a frequently quoted article, Janis & Mann (1976) discusses several psychological dimensions of decision-making. Janis describes the stressful nature of decision-making, particularly the stress arising because of anticipated material and social losses the may accrue from the decision and from recognition that reputation and self-esteem are at stake. He goes on to conclude that the resulting stress is the major cause of errors in decision making. These errors have a price over time in terms of the ability and

willingness of the individual to adhere to the decision.

Janis postulates that people cope with resolving a difficult choice in one of five different patterns. These patterns center on a characteristic mode of information-processing that governs the type and amount of information the decision-maker will prefer. His model suggests that this information preference is not so much a personality characteristic but a reflection of circumstances. These circumstances include the presence or absence of three conditions: awareness of the risks involved, hope of finding a better solution, and the time available to make the decision.

Drawing on this conception of decision-making, the task of the change facilitator is to bring about the conditions necessary for the most adaptive coping pattern. The first step is to create a situation where decision-makers systematically confront and answer questions about risks and gains specific to the decision at hand. Janis proposes using a balance sheet to take account of both the cognitive and motivational aspects of planning for future action. Analysis of the balance sheets prepared by individuals making stressful decisions indicates that thoroughness in filling out the sheet is essential to subsequent adherence to the decision. Errors of omission and commission make the decision-maker more vulnerable to negative feedback as the decision is implemented. Given the current climate in schools which often minimizes change as a value, and given the lack of prestige accorded teachers, it is important to be sensitive to the likelihood of negative feedback and to spend adequate time on the balance sheet.

The balance sheet can be drawn as a grid where the first cell represents incentives for the status quo and the second cell represents costs of maintaining present practices. The third cell represents incentives for adopting the new practice and the fourth cell provides an opportunity for

anticipating problems with the new approach.

The balance sheet procedure is easily implemented in a workshop format where group members can construct a sheet that is personally relevant sharing only what they choose with the group. This sharing process can maximize the likelihood that all of the possible alternatives are reviewed. Janis also recommends that the change agent construct a list of common considerations or reservations that are expressed by others when faced with a similar decision. After the teacher spontaneously generates their concerns on the balance sheet, the previously constructed list of considerations can be circulated and comments from the group elicited. By providing the list before group sharing begins a measure of privacy can be ensured. Group members can comment on possible considerations that appeared on the change agents list without revealing whether they have appeared on their own list. An example of a balance sheet pertaining a teacher who is deciding about an innovation is presented in Figure 2.

The second task of the change facilitator in promoting adaptive decision-making is to maximize the sense that there hope that the innovation represents a better solution. It is at this point, perhaps that it is most clear that the traditional school district jargon which reserves to administrators the title of decision-maker has actually been very limiting in promoting change. In actual practice, the administration makes only the very early decisions about whether a change is necessary or desirable and sometimes what form(s) it should take. Any hope of success is actually tied to the decisions of individual teachers about implementing the innovation. This hope is strengthened by examining the individual teachers's concerns, as laid out in on the balance sheet and introducing strategies for minimizing disincentives and maximizing the likelihood that anticipated incentives will

Situation: John, a 53 year old white male teacher in a large urban school district has been asked to volunteer for the staff integration program. If he volunteers, he will be reassigned from his middle class suburban high school to teach the same subject, social studies, at an inner city senior high school.

pro's

con's

Accepting
New
Assignment

- * the extra pay is very attractive
- * I would like to help disadvantaged students
- * the district is pushing us to accept this transfer; I'd like to help

- * I'm afraid my car will be ripped off at the new school
- * I doubt I have the skills to teach "these" students
- * It is a long drive to the new school

Retaining
Old
Assignment

- * My students like me
- * Students enjoy my jokes/humor
- * I know how to get along at this school
- * My lessons are planned: teaching doesn't take all my time

- * The student composition is changing at my home school: I'd don't enjoy it like I used to
- * I just can't teach students some students and that number is growing
- * I'm very bored as a teacher; the routine is so bland I could die

Figure 2

A Sample Balance Sheet

be experienced. Without negating the importance of the organizational structural support for change which was discussed earlier, it is important to appreciate our neglect of the individual decision-maker and the tasks they are confronted with.

The literature on cognitively-oriented strategies for helping individuals make decisions about proposed changes is very extensive. The work by Janis and the use of the balance sheet are only to illustrate concrete examples of the conceptual framework and helping strategies which the literature suggests. Watson and Tharp (1985) provide a host of related concepts and helping strategies as well as a careful practitioner-oriented synthesis of the literature in this area.

Self-task Cluster

The final component of personal concerns in includes an uncertainty about, "...the demands of the innovation, his/her inadequacy to meet those demands, and his/her role in the innovation" (Hall, George & Rutherford, 1979). Resolution of these issues is the task that confronts the individual asked to implement the innovation and the change facilitator whose task it is to foster adaptive decision making by building confidence in the innovation as a more desirable and a feasible solution.

It has long been thought that the way to increased desired behavior--in this case participation in the innovation--is to provide incentives or reinforcers for responding appropriately to specific stimuli. However, Bandura (1982) has argued that people process and synthesize information over long intervals and multiple situations and actions rather than simply responding to immediate stimuli. In contrast to earlier reinforcement theory, he has taken the position that what the individual believes about future outcomes and the anticipated consequences is more powerful than

traditional ideas about incentives. When initially contemplating an innovation Bandura points out people will avoid situations they believe exceed their coping skills but they do get involved in activities or prefer to stay in situations which they judge themselves capable of handling.

The task of the change facilitator is to create conditions where the individual can see that the outcome will be worthwhile for them in some fashion, and secondly that they are capable of carrying out the innovation in a way that will lead to fulfillment of their goals. This sense of capability or mastery which Bandura calls self efficacy expectation determines how much effort the individual is willing to expend and how hard and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles. Some research suggests that self efficacy expectations may be a more powerful predictor of behavior than either outcome expectancies or past performance (cf. Sherer, Maddux, Mercandante, Prentice-Dunn, Jacobs, & Rogers, 1982). It is important to appreciate that expectations alone are not sufficient without the corresponding component capabilities. However, in the past many inservice programs focused on developing capabilities to the exclusion of confronting teacher expectancies about outcomes and personal efficacy in achieving those outcomes.

The goal of the change agent, Bandura (1977) has suggested, is to reduce defensive behavior by using four sources of information about personal efficacy. The four sources of information for building self efficacy are: performance accomplishments or mastery experiences, vicarious experience using live or symbolic modelling, verbal persuasion with either face to face or mediated sessions, and emotional arousal which involves cognitive appraisal of physiological reactions to anxiety or stress. What is important to appreciate is that the dominant instructional strategy, the lecture or

verbal persuasion is actually the least effective in changing behavior.

Performance accomplishments are the most effective (Bandura, 1982).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to detail strategies for inducing each of the sources of information (see Watson & Tharp, 1985), but particular attention is drawn to emotional arousal as a source of self efficacy information and the dimension of attribution. Cognitive appraisals, or attributions, are increasingly recognized in psychology (Meichenbaum, 1977) as a powerful tool in promoting behavior change. Changing cognitive attributions is the delicate art of getting people to see situations in a new light, to give themselves new messages about the situation or event. The goal is to take a self-defeating message or attribution for why one does not participate in the intervention and turn it into an affirming statement that validates probable competence or expectations for self efficacy in the tasks required by the innovation.

Using the balance sheet the facilitator can invite individuals/workshop participants to review their current situation and appreciate that they are not completely satisfied with it, that is, to acknowledge that there might be room to consider an alternative solution. By examining each of the cells in one's own balance sheet teachers can gain insight into criteria they hold for evaluating their experience of work. For many individuals these may have been implicit and not easily articulated in response to an open-ended questions, e.g. "well, what concerns do you have about doing x ?" Reviewing these criteria provides the facilitator with a means of establishing the link between the worth of the innovation in an abstract sense and its worth at a more personal level. This is a necessary prerequisite to determining the extent to which the individual feels capable of carrying out what is required by the innovation.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on how strategies for addressing personal concerns could be understood and developed. Our argument has been that the curriculum change literature has a relatively strong base of sociologically-oriented strategies when psychologically-oriented strategies are needed as a complement, especially for addressing personal concerns. The psychological literature on decision-making and efficacy has not been utilized to any great extent and offers real prospect for helping address the personal concerns of teachers about implementing an innovation. Several specific concepts from the work of Janis and Bandura have been presented and several practical uses of their ideas have been illustrated. Beyond these illustrations, however, lies a rich literature and set of strategies for helping. We feel this literature needs to be applied to helping teachers implement change.

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